

REPUBLIQUE RWANDAISE

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PRESS RELEASE

The Government and people of Rwanda regret deeply the loss of approximately three hundred lives of their daughters and sons, in Kibeho, some of whom were killed or mutilated by the same machetes wielded by those who perpetrated the genocide and massacres in April to July 1994. Others were killed when the Government forces and UNAMIR troops responded in self defense against armed attack by militia and former soldiers inside the camp for displaced persons, in Kibeho.

The Government of Rwanda has decided to investigate the incident to determine who would bear the responsibility for the deaths.

The camp in Kibeho was hosting not only the ordinary refugees but also the militia and former Government soldiers who took refuge in the camps with their arms, during the Operation Turquoise. That particular camp was also used as a training camp where all operations of infiltration from camps outside and inside were organised.

The arming of former government soldiers and militia in the refugee camps in neighboring countries and the existence of camps for displaced persons inside Rwanda used for infiltration and as transit points contributed to the deteriorating security situation in Rwanda. Since it is the Rwanda Government which bears primary responsibility for maintaining security throughout the country, the Government took a decision to close those camps. UNAMIR was fully informed and had participated in the closure of the camps.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: THEODORE SELLIN
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The decision to close all camps for displaced persons in Rwanda was taken for the following reasons:

- To ensure security by preventing incursions into the country from internal camps and from the camps in neighboring countries;
- The camps could have contributed to the destabilisation of the country;
- To encourage all displaced people to go back to their former homes, instead of living on humanitarian assistance;
- To free most of displaced people, who were held hostage inside the camps, some of whom were also killed by militia a situation the Government could no longer tolerate.

Presently, more than 500 women and children have been taken as hostage by a group of militia inside the Kibeho camp.

For these reasons, the Government of Rwanda, after consultation with the UNAMIR, and after requesting that the displaced people leave the camps voluntarily, was obliged to take action to resolve the problem.

All displaced people were requested to move out of the camps. The Government closed three camps successfully without any incident and, with the cooperation of UNAMIR and Non-Governmental Organisation operating inside the country.

The Government of Rwanda would like to appeal to the international community, especially donor countries and United Nations, to resist the "quick response" of condemnation of the Government decision, without a full knowledge of the facts and circumstances. The rush to judge the action of Government appears to be part of a scenario of some members of the international community to discredit, weaken or dislodge the Government of Rwanda.

There is also a general apathy of some members of the international community to the arrests of the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda. That is not a good basis for establishing peace and stability in Rwanda.

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The Government of Rwanda would like to make an appeal to the United Nations and international community, particularly friendly countries and donors to cease supporting the militia and former Government army. These two armed groups should not be recognized or treated as refugees since they do not meet the internationally established criteria to be considered as such.

At the same time, assistance to Rwanda Government should not be given with conditionalities as the Government tries to stabilise and rebuild the country.

New York, 26th April 1995

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